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Mali

Post Report

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This is the official post report prepared by the post. The information contained herein is directed to official US Government employees and their families. Any other information concerning the facts as set forth herein is to be regarded as unofficial information.

Preface

Mali is known as the cradle of African civilization. Hereditary storytellers (griots) still recite and sing the long, colorful history of Mali through the ages.

Bamako, the capital and largest city, sits on the banks of the Niger River and takes its name from the Bambara words for crocodile. The Bambara name for the river is Djoliba (kind and just old man), and "mali" means hippopotamus.

The Niger influences the life of most Malian cities. It carries goods and people and provides irrigation and a rich harvest of fish.

A new white mosque with tall minarets is a city landmark and can be seen from the surrounding hills and from across the river. Driving in from the airport, you can see the minarets rising above the trees.

The Bambara symbol is the "chiwara," a wood-carved, stylized gazelle. The Mali symbol is the following design:



The national motto is "One people, one purpose, one faith."

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The Host Country

Area, Geography, and Climate

The Republic of Mali, shaped like a butterfly with a broken wing, covers 465,000 square miles. It is in the same time zone as Greenwich—5 hours ahead of eastern standard time, and located in the Tropics.

Landlocked Mali is surrounded by seven former French territories: Mauritania, Senegal, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Upper Volta, Niger, and Algeria. It is largely desert (Saharan) with tropical areas in the south (Soudanese) and savanna in the middle (Sahelian).

The vast plateau is broken by isolated rocky masses—one of the most famous is Bandiagara ("Dogon country") in the central area—and river basins. Bamako lies at an elevation between 950 and 1,000 feet. The Niger River, on which Bamako is built, is 2,600 miles long, and its floodcrest takes 6 months to traverse the country. The Niger flows northeast through swamps, lakes, and pastures to the edge of the Sahara at Tombouctou (Timbuktu). There it turns east through dunes and low desert hills for 100 miles before turning southeast past Gao into Niger. Just over the Mali-Niger border are rapids. Scheduled river steamers do not go downstream from Gao.

December to March, the ideal time to visit Bamako, it is dry and clear with moderate temperatures from 60°F at night to the mid-80s during the day. From mid-March through June, the hottest and driest season, temperatures often reach over 100°F and frequent duststorms occur. Rains usually begin in June and continue until October. Near the Ivory Coast and Guinea borders, Mali has open forest and savanna. Farther north trees become shorter and sparser. The sub-Saharan area is a hot, waterless plain, broken only by patches of thorn bush. All rainfall (60–80 inches in the south) occurs during the June-October rainy season. It decreases northward (44

	Temperature Average (°F)		Relative humidity(%) at midday
	Max.	Min.	
January	93	62	21
February	97	66	16
March	98	74	21
April	103	77	29
May	102	78	42
June	95	74	60
July	88	70	71
August	87	72	76
September	89	71	71
October	92	71	54
November	95	67	35
December	92	63	25

inches a year in Bamako) to the Malian Sahara (that half of the country north of the Great Bend of the Niger), where rainfall is scarce.

Population

Bamako is Mali's largest city with a population of about 600,000. Other cities are Segou, Mopti, Tombouctou, and Gao, all on the Niger River; Kayes, a railroad center northwest of Bamako near the Senegalese border; and Sikasso, southeast of Bamako. Some 10% of Mali's total population of almost 7 million live in cities of over 5,000 inhabitants.

Most Malians live in small towns in the Niger or Senegal River Valleys, following such traditional occupations as farming, fishing, herding, and weaving. Others are artisans and merchants. Favorite pastimes in all villages are storytelling and dancing to drumbeats, with the youngest to the oldest expressing themselves in the many rhythms and dances.

The largest cultural group, the Ouangaras, occupy most of the country south and east of Bamako. They are divided into three castes: The Bambara (representing one-fourth of Mali's population), an agricultural people whose culture is one of Africa's most interesting; the Malinke, also an agricultural people who suffered much

from the slave trade and are well-known warriors; and the Dioulas, traders and merchants, considered nobility.

Four main groups are descended from the Sudanese: The Sarakolles, traders and sailors who have made their way all over the world to return home when their fortunes are made; the Songhais, who are boaters on the Niger and have their traditional capital at Gao; and the Sorkos, who live near Tombouctou.

The Dogon, a special Sudanese tribe, has avoided most outside influences and practices its own animist faith. They have produced a unique, artistic culture in their villages, which are built around the rocky cliffs of Bandiagara. It is known as "Dogon country."

North of the Niger in the Sahelian and Saharan zones live the Peul or Fulani, Toucouleurs, Tuaregs, Moors, and Arabs. They are nomadic cattle breeders and shepherds.

French is Mali's official language. The most widely spoken and written local language is Bambara, but all tribal groups have their own nonwritten languages. Tuareg has its own alphabet.

Most Malians are Muslim. A small percentage are Catholic and Protestant Christians. Some Bambara, Bobo, Bozo, Dogon, Minyanka, and Sinufu are practicing animists.

A large, new mosque, entirely paid for by the Government of Saudi

Arabia, was recently completed in Bamako. Many old Malian mosques of note are found, such as those in Djenne, Mopti, and Tombouctou.

Referred to historically as the Soudan ("Land of the Black People"), Mali is partial heir to the succession of African empires that occupied the West African savanna. They were in touch with Mediterranean and Islamic centers of civilization only via long, arduous Saharan trade routes.

In the 11th century, Mali was at the height of power. As "middlemen" in Africa, Malians offered their towns as trading centers for gold and slaves from the forest countries of the south; salt from the Saharan mines; and horses, swords, books, cloth, and clothing from North Africa. Islamic teachings were carried down from the north and spread south throughout the Malian Empire, helping to bring closer cultural contacts between North and West Africa.

During the reign of Sundiata Keita (1230-55), the power of the Mande people was gradually extended over much of West Africa. Although Sundiata Keita is considered the outstanding Malian cultural hero (and the subject of many poems), a better known Malian ruler was Mansa Musa (1312-27). Under Mansa Musa Mali became a major African power, stretching from the Atlantic in the west to the Middle Niger in the east and from the Sahara in the north to what is now the Republic of Guinea in the south.

In the following century, the Malian Empire, considered by many scholars to have been the greatest West Africa ever knew, was soon overshadowed by the Songhai Empire centered at Gao. At its peak it encompassed the Hausa States as far as Kano in present-day Nigeria and territories in Upper Volta and Niger. Tombouctou became the empire's acknowledged intellectual center, where peace and justice were an accepted fact of life, and the reign of Askia Mohammed the last great ruler, was looked upon as a golden age. Finally, the arrival of Moroccan crossbows and cannons in 1598 destroyed the empire's security.

Bamako, a village since the mid-17th century, was occupied in 1883 by the French. Malian resistance elsewhere in Mali continued until 1889, when Samory Toure was finally defeated. As the colony of Soudan,

Mali was administered with other French colonial territories in the Federation of French West Africa, its capital at Dakar.

Public Institutions

Mali became a self-governing republic within the French Community in 1958. The following year representatives from Mali, Senegal, Dahomey (now Benin), and Upper Volta met to draft a constitution founding the Federation of Mali. When the constitution was presented to the National Assembly, only Mali and Senegal voted to join the Federation, which was formed in January 1959. The Mali Federation collapsed on August 20, 1960, when Senegal seceded. On September 22, 1960, Mali proclaimed itself the Republic of Mali and withdrew from the Community.

A military coup on November 19, 1968, overthrew the Modibo Keita government, which had ruled Mali since independence. The Military Committee of National Liberation (CMLN) retained control of the government from 1968 to 1979 when the Democratic Union of the Malian People (UDPM), led by General Moussa Traore, former leader of the CMLN, was voted into power and a one-party system was established.

Countries having resident diplomatic representation, with accredited ambassadors, in Bamako are Canada, France, the FRG, Ghana, Nigeria, Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Saudi Arabia, Guinea, Mauritania, the USSR, the GDR, North Korea, Cuba, Yugoslavia, Morocco, Iraq, and the PRC.

Arts, Science, and Education

The Institut National des Arts (INA) in Bamako teaches artists to carve masks, figures, and other wooden objects. It also teaches music, dance, weaving, ironworking, and silver and gold jewelry making. Outside the city, villagers keep the ancient arts alive by passing trades from father to son. All weavers of traditional narrow strips of material are men because the loom must be worked from the waist of the weaver, something which a pregnant woman cannot do. Girls and women weave rugs and other wide materials on large looms.

At the Artisanat in downtown Bamako, there are many beautiful bags, briefcases, and shoes made of lizard, crocodile, snakeskin, and other leather. The men who work in the Artisanat shops have graduated from the 4-year course at the nearby INA.

In the same block as the Artisanat and the INA is the new white and gold mosque. Its pristine beauty contrasts the surrounding low, mud-walled buildings.

Bamako has several schools of higher learning: the Ecole Normale Supérieure, a teachers college, the Ecole Normale Secondaire, Ecole Nationale d'Administration, Ecole Nationale d'Ingenieurs, an agricultural school, and the Ecole de Medecine.

French doctors staff the Institut Marchoux, a hospital for leprosy research and other skin diseases.

Until only a few years ago, the curriculum of all schools followed the French system, including French history and culture. Now more and more schools are teaching Malian history and some Bambara.

Grade schools are free and obligatory, but parents must buy books and supplies. These costs make it difficult for most families to keep children in school for long. Literacy is low. Girls in villages are betrothed when young and boys must help work the farm or herd the animals.

Commerce and Industry

Mali's primary economic activities are agricultural and livestock production. Manufacturing and energy account for only 10% of the gross national product. In the agricultural sector, cotton, peanuts, rice, and animal products are produced for export. Millet, sorghum, rice, corn, and sugar are grown for local consumption. Livestock (cattle, sheep, goats) is raised for both the domestic and export markets. Fishing is a major source of local protein and export revenue.

Manufacturing in Mali involves the processing of food products and the manufacture of consumer items, simple agricultural tools, and construction materials. Malian state enterprises include sugar, textiles, matches, tobacco, cement, a ceramics factory, a dairy, a tannery, and a slaughterhouse. Private industry includes soap, candy, fiber bags, vinegar, bleach, plastics, a lumber yard, noodle factories, and construction materials firms.



The Dogon race is renowned for its mountain traditions, its religions, and its dwellings.

Although Mali is known to have deposits of several minerals—including iron ore, bauxite, uranium, and phosphate—infrastructure and capitalization costs have prevented their exploitation. The USSR is currently developing a gold mine near Kalana. Mining companies are exploring for petroleum and uranium.

Except for a few Lebanese merchants and French commercial representatives, Malians control almost all local trade. Enterprises vary from large transport and trading houses to sidewalk merchants. Local markets offer a wide variety of traditional and modern goods. Although landlocked Mali is far from sources of imported goods, trade competition and government-fixed prices have kept prices lower here than in neighboring countries.

Transportation

Automobiles

Most roads are bumpy and unpaved. Large mudholes during the rainy season can be particularly disastrous to low cars. Four-wheel-drive vehicles must be used for most long out-of-town trips. Employees can rent chauffeur-driven Land Rovers from the Embassy or AID.

Cars shipped from the US take 6–10 weeks to arrive in Abidjan, Ivory Coast, where clearance procedures take another 4 or more weeks. Cars are trucked or driven from there to Bamako. Gasoline for employees costs about \$3.50 a gallon.

In choosing a car, remember that spare parts for American cars are not available in Mali. You must order from

the US or ship them with your household effects. Also, Malian mechanics are not trained to work on American cars. In terms of service and availability of trained repair personnel, Peugeot, Renault, and, to a lesser extent, VW are the most practical cars to have here.

Most people sell their foreign cars before leaving Bamako. Small, second-hand French cars are sometimes available, but expensive. Air-conditioning is advisable. If you have a choice, take heavy-duty options, such as heavy springs and shock absorbers, and avoid dark colors.

Local

Taxis are available in the city, but it is difficult, if not impossible, to get a taxi back into the city once you are in the surrounding countryside. Taxis are generally not recommended.

The bache or small Peugeot truck-type car carries about 16 closely packed passengers. They have regular routes between towns and are very inexpensive, but they have breakdowns, delays, and detours en route.

A train connects Bamako to Kayes and Dakar. The scheduled 36-hour trip to Dakar is an interesting way to see the countryside; however, the trip is very difficult and recommended only for the hardy traveler. Coachettes and first-class service are available, but electric lights, toilets, and air-conditioning usually do not work. Travelers must also bring their own food and drinks.

The new airport at Bamako is 9 miles from town across the Niger and has a restaurant and comfortable waiting room. Air Mali and a private charter, Mali Air, offer service to Malian urban centers.

Regional

Air service between Bamako and Paris varies from five weekly flights during summer to three weekly flights in winter. The principal airlines serving exterior capitals from Bamako are Air Mali, Air Afrique, UTA, Air Algerie, and Aeroflot. TWA has daily service between Paris and the east coast. Pan Am has three weekly flights between New York and Dakar. Passengers transiting Dakar must have valid Senegalese visas. Dakar and Abidjan are about 1½ hours from Bamako by air.

Communications

Central Market, Bamako.

Telephone and Telegraph

Some government-leased homes have phones, but they are not dependable and are frequently out of order. In addition to the monthly charge, each call is charged separately.

Long-distance service is not always satisfactory, but calls can be arranged. It costs about \$25 for a 5-minute call to the east coast of the US.

Mail and Pouch

To use the pouch, you must use the appropriate Department ZIP code for the type of material being sent. All personal envelope mail, regardless of size, and all packages weighing 2 pounds or less are authorized for pouch from the Department to post and must be addressed:

(NAME)
American Embassy-Bamako
Department of State
Washington, DC 20520

For magazines, newspapers, and packages weighing over 2 pounds sent by pouch from the Department to post use ZIP code 20521.

Personnel in Bamako are authorized to use the pouch to return, for exchange, any wearing apparel manufactured and purchased in the US or received as gifts. Authorization applies only to items received during your current assignment. Packages mailed from Bamako must have the correct US postage. Packages must be endorsed with a statement that they contain merchandise purchased in and received from the US, being returned to addressee for exchange. Other packages, for example, gifts, are not allowed to be sent from post by pouch. The international postage rate is based on weight per gram. The Embassy receptionist will assist employees and official visitors in mailing letters. Packages or registered mail, however, must be handled by the individual.

Bring US stamps or arrange to have someone in the US to send stamps as needed. US stamps are not available here.

Radio and TV

The local radio station broadcasts in French and Bambara. Western music is broadcast late at night and on Saturday afternoons. For other programs, a strong shortwave radio is needed to



pick up VOA, BBC, France International, Radio Paris, and AFRTS. Bring a radio with an external antenna.

Ham radios, citizens-band transceivers, and such are not permitted by the Malian Government.

Mali has no TV, but there are plans to install it in the future.

Newspapers, Magazines, and Technical Journals

Newspapers, such as the *Paris International Herald Tribune*, arrive several days late. It is helpful to have some magazine subscriptions before you arrive at post. *Newsweek* and *Time* (European editions) can be purchased locally for about \$3.50. Popular magazines in French, such as *Elle* and *Paris Match*, are also available locally. Subscriptions from the US sent by pouch take 1 month or more.

Health and Medicine

Medical Facilities

The post currently has an American contract nurse and a well-stocked dispensary. A position for a Foreign Service doctor has been established. Several European physicians, including a general practitioner, a pediatrician,

an internist, and a radiologist, practice in Bamako. You must speak and understand French to use them. The Department of State regional medical officer, based in Dakar, makes periodic post visits.

Persons requiring complicated laboratory work or hospitalization, including expectant mothers, are evacuated to Europe or the US due to the level of hospital care here. Both mother and infant should have 6-week checkups before returning to post.

Have a dental checkup before coming. Although simple or temporary work can be done here, extractions and more complicated work must be done in either Dakar or Abidjan. Leaving Bamako for dental work can be inconvenient and expensive.

If you wear prescription glasses, bring at least two pairs. Sunglasses are a must. The French optician can grind lenses but is expensive.

Bring at least a 6-month supply of any needed medicines and arrange for continued mail service through the pouch from your pharmacist. Local pharmacies do not always carry even simple remedies, and US-produced or name-brand medications are not stocked.

Community Health

The community sanitation level is poor. Only a small area of Bamako is served by a sewage system, and open sewers exist even in the better city sections. Garbage collection is erratic. An effort to improve municipal services is underway, but results are slow.

Fly swatters; insecticides for mosquitoes, ants, cockroaches, and flies; and rat poison should be bought in the US. Some insecticides are available here, but they are more expensive than US brands. Also, if you garden, bring special rose and plant insecticides. These precautions are not just for comfort. Health and sanitation are real problems.

Preventive Measures

Emphasis on disease prevention can save many people from illness. It is unlikely you will contract any local diseases because prescribed shots at regular intervals and relatively simple precautions can prevent most of them.

Routinely boil, for at least 10 minutes, and then filter all tapwater before using it for drinking or for making ice. Avoid all local milk and cream products. Wash fruit, vegetables, and salad materials in boiled/filtered water and soak them 30 minutes in an iodine or household bleach solution (both locally available) before eating. Serve all meat well done, never rare or medium.

You will probably need a time of physical adjustment to tropical heat. More rest, more fluids, and more salt intake are essential, but you will soon learn to judge your own needs.

Most diseases suffered by Americans would be encountered anywhere. Colds and upper respiratory illnesses head the list. Sinus problems may be aggravated either by the humidity during the wet season or by the dryness and dust of the dry season, or both. Flu, skin rashes, and intestinal problems periodically spread through the community.

Begin to take a malaria suppressant (Aralen is recommended for this area) 2 weeks before arrival and weekly thereafter. Dosage is as follows:

- 15-30 lbs. body weight - $\frac{1}{4}$ tablet weekly
- 30-60 lbs. body weight - $\frac{1}{2}$ tablet weekly
- 60-100 lbs. body weight - 1 tablet weekly
- over 100 lbs. body weight - 2 tablets weekly

Aralen is a very dangerous drug. Keep your supply out of the reach of children.

American personnel are routinely immunized against smallpox, typhoid, cholera, yellow fever, tetanus, diphtheria, polio, infectious hepatitis, and rabies. All of these diseases, except for smallpox, are present in Mali. Start immunizations early. More than one in-

jection is required for several of the immunizations and a specified time must lapse between them. It is easier not to have more than two at a time. The Embassy nurse gives needed boosters.

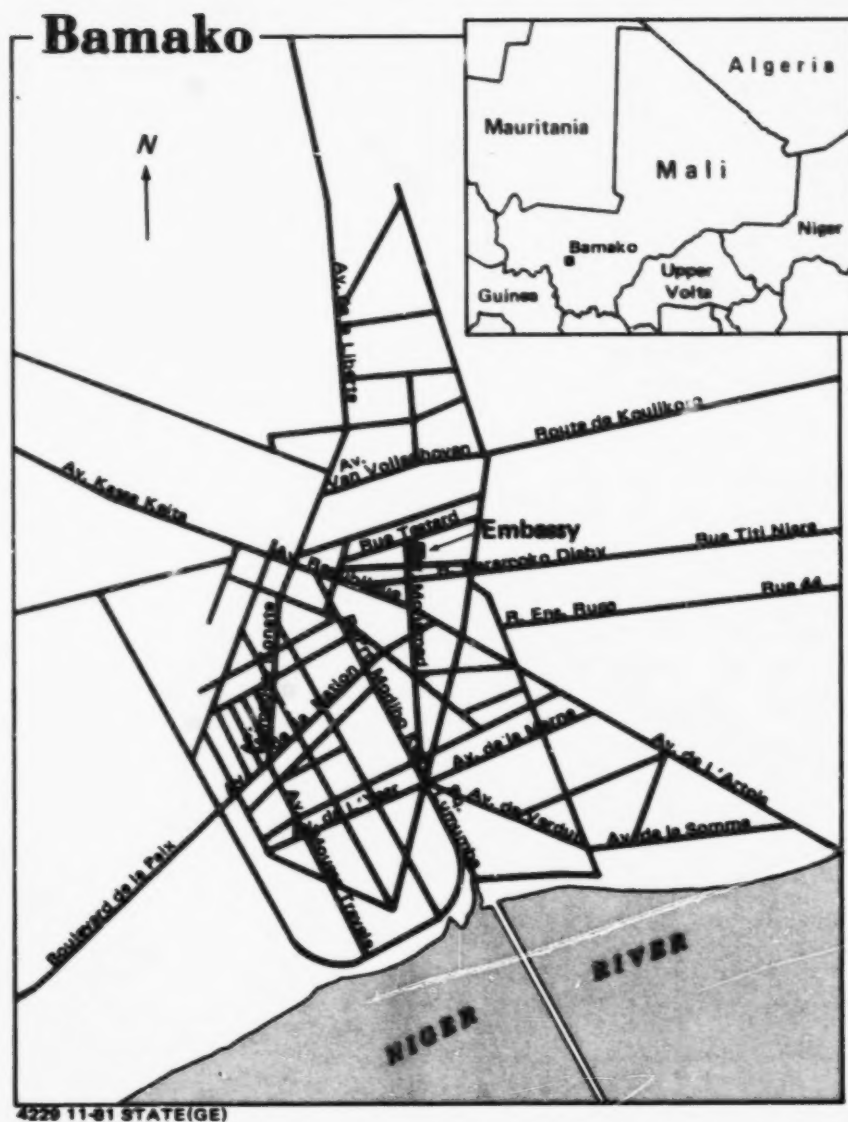
Take time to stock up on personal medical supplies. Bring a good supply of prescription drugs, including locally unavailable birth control items. Bring also dry-skin lotion, heat-rash powder, aspirin, thermometers, Band-Aids, gauze pads, suntan lotion, insect repellent, standard first aid supplies, and vitamin and mineral supplements. Children should take fluoride tablets.

Families with children will find a vaporizer, a heating pad, and an ice bag useful to bring.

You can enjoy relatively good health in Bamako if you take precautions and use common sense.

Employment for Spouses and Dependents

Employment for spouses and dependents at the Embassy is usually on a temporary or part-time basis. Typing is useful, for there may be part-time vacancies when the regular office force is vacationing or the workload is unusually heavy. Occasionally opportunities exist at the Embassy and AID for generalists in the administrative field.



American Embassy

Bamako

Bamako, Mali's capital and largest city, has 600,000 inhabitants and is one of West Africa's most colorful cities. Unlike the coastal cities of West Africa, Bamako is truly African. In fact, one travel author emphasizes that Bamako is a genuinely African city that should be explored on foot. The city is built along the kilometer-wide Niger River above the rapids of Sotuba, where high water upriver navigation to Guinea begins. Bamako is expanding rapidly in both directions along the river.

Most of Bamako's houses are low, plastered, mud-walled compounds built along unpaved streets. Increasingly, however, modern, cement-walled villas with small gardens are being built and rented. Mali's officials and prosperous merchants and most of the small foreign community (2,500 French, 125 Lebanese, and various diplomatic groups) live in quiet residential sections near the river or on the roads to Korofina or Sotuba.

The cliffs of Koulouba overlook the city, change color from dirt-red in the dry season to lush green in the rainy season. The Koulouba plateau is the site of the Presidential Palace (now used only for ceremonial occasions); several ministries, including Foreign Affairs; and the Point G Hospital.

Bamako's business district radiates from the Grand Marche, a circular covered market built in the traditional style. It has three inner rings and a center courtyard where spices, rice, and mainly dried foods are sold. Handicrafts such as woven blankets and rugs, mud cloth (a Malian specialty), local hats, jewelry, ostrich eggshells from Tombouctou, and other decorative items from Mali and neighboring countries can be found. In the ring next to the courtyard and in the outer rings are useful everyday items: underwear, T-shirts, sandals, hardware, cloth, kitchen utensils, etc.

Spreading out from this central location are book and paper supply stores, butchers, and other shops. Malimag and Somiex, Bamako's private and nationalized "supermarkets," are located 3 blocks from the Grand Marche and are about the same distance in the other direction from the Embassy. Prices are fixed in the supermarkets, but most people bargain prices in the Marche and smaller stores.

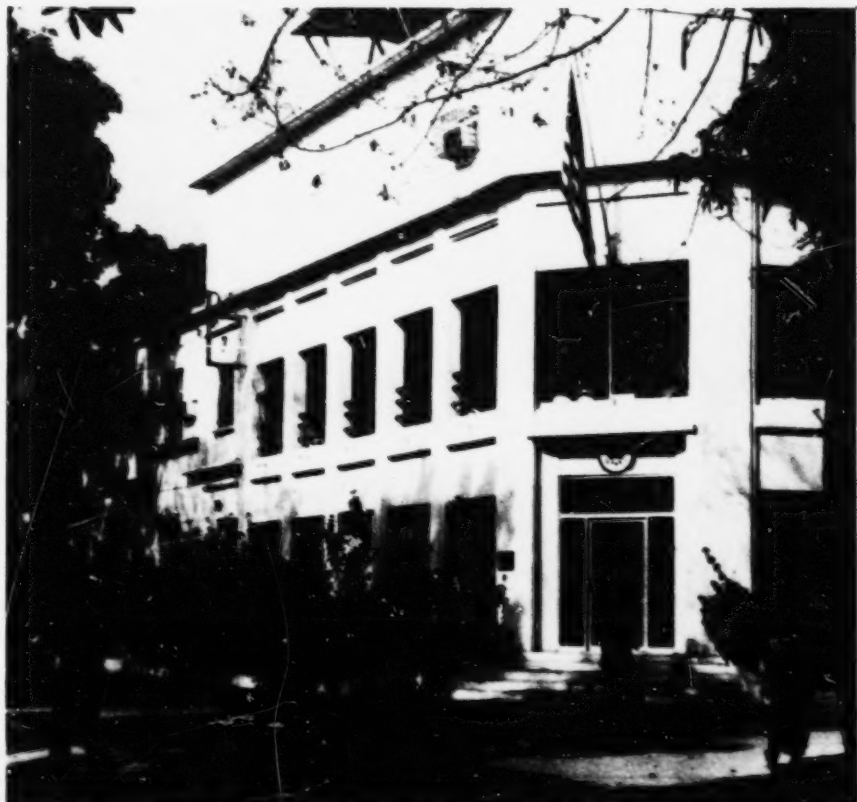
Government buildings, many in the French-developed Soudanic style, similar to Mali's mosques, surround the market section along the shady streets.

Two outstanding structures in the city are the new 17-story Hotel de l'Amitie, built by the Egyptian Government, and the new mosque. The Hotel de l'Amitie overlooks the river and hosts large parties and balls.

The Post and Its Administration

The US opened an Embassy in Bamako on September 24, 1960, 2 days after Mali proclaimed its independence. A USICA post and AID mission were established the next year. A resident Ambassador now represents the US Government in Bamako. The DCM, the USICA public affairs officer, the AID director, the Peace Corps director, and the Joint Administrative Office director report directly to the Ambassador. The Embassy is located at the corner of Rue Testard and Avenue Mohamed V in downtown Bamako. Office hours are Monday-Friday, 7:30 am to 3:30 pm; phone numbers are 22-56-63, 22-58-34, and 22-48-35.

The Chancery, Bamako.



AID offices are located off Square Lumumba, in the Air Afrique building and in the Quartier du Fleuve; the telephone number for AID offices is 22-36-02. Peace Corps offices are located in Niarela and the telephone numbers are 22-44-79 and 22-35-53.

The three-story Chancery building houses the offices of the Ambassador, DCM, the USICA public affairs officers, and the Joint Administrative Office director, as well as those of the commercial, political, economic, and consular officers. The Chancery offers full-range consular and commercial services to US citizens and other visitors. In a compound across from the Chancery are located the Budget and Fiscal Office, Personnel, Community Liaison Office, and the Health Unit. The General Services Office is located in the Oulofobougou/Bolibana neighborhood. A Marine Security Guard detachment provides a 24-hour watch in the Chancery.

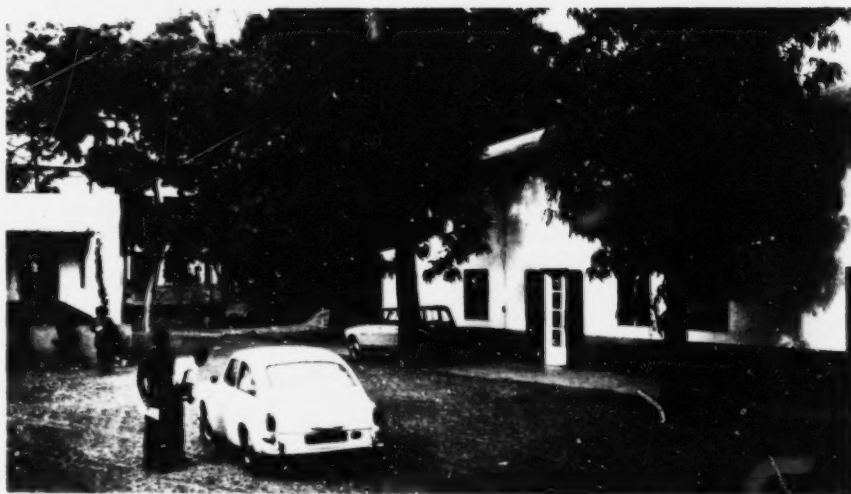
The US Agency for International Development (USAID), is represented in Bamako. Present staffing consists of 28 direct-hire, 4 international development interns, and 3 participating-agency-service-agreement employees. The USAID mission consists of the executive, program, management, agricultural development, general development, controller, design and evaluation, and Sahel development planning regional offices.

USAID programs are directed toward assisting Mali in medium- and long-term efforts to improve the quality of life of the rural poor through activities in the agricultural, livestock, and health sectors. Coupled with these activities is a local development program of small projects aimed at preserving or developing rural infrastructure through the participation of beneficiary populations.

All activities have been developed collaboratively with the Malian Government and follow Malian development priorities. Ongoing projects of interest to visitors in Mali are the Central Veterinary Laboratory in Bamako, a feedlot on the road to Koulikoro, Operation Mills in Mopti, Action Riz-Sorgho in Gao, livestock projects at Segou, and various local development projects in the 5th and 6th Regions.

The agreement between the Government of Mali and the US for the establishment of a Peace Corps program became effective on December 23, 1969. The first small group of

The Employee Services compound is across the street from the Embassy.



The Hotel de l'Amitié, Bamako.



Volunteers entered service in April 1971. Currently, 50 Volunteers and a staff of 8, including 4 Americans, are located in each of Mali's 7 Regions, although none are located north of Gao.

Volunteers work in rural health, education, and agricultural programs. In the agricultural sector, Volunteers are working in vegetable production, appropriate technology, and community development programs. Health Volunteers are bringing health services to remote villages. Peace Corps Volunteers teaching English at the

Teachers College in Bamako (ENSUP) from 1973-78 trained a sufficient number of English teachers so that since the fall of 1978 all English teaching at primary and secondary levels has been done by Malians. Education Volunteers continue to teach Malians, especially in math and science.

USICA is a two-officer post in Bamako, with six local positions. The Public Affairs Office is located in the Embassy, and the library is in a separate building on the compound. The USICA program includes films and closed-circuit TV (VTR) opera-

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A view of the Ambassador's residence.



tions, a library, book presentations to local institutions, cultural programs such as lectures and concerts, and management of the educational and cultural exchange program.

Housing

Temporary Quarters

If an employee is on home leave or an empty furnished house is available, vacant housing will be assigned until a permanent place can be established. Temporary duty personnel live in the Hotel de l'Amitie.

Permanent Housing

American personnel live comfortably but simply in Bamako. The Joint Administrative Office leases houses for all personnel.

The Embassy owns the Ambassador's and DCM's residences. They are located in an attractive older area near the river with large shade trees, extensive gardens, and swimming pools. The leased residence of the public affairs officer is nearby.

Most other rental housing is one-level cement houses with porches or verandas, living room, dining room or area, kitchen, several bedrooms and bathrooms, and a laundry area—usually outside under a roof or in a separate building.

Furnishings

Following are the minimum items of furniture and furnishings for the basic inventory in government-furnished quarters:

Living Room

- 1 three-seat sofa
- 2 upholstered chairs
- 1 coffee table
- 2 end table lamps
- 1 12'x15' carpet
- 2 end tables

Other Bedrooms

- 2 twin beds
- 1 nightstand
- 1 dresser
- 1 chest
- 1 bedroom chair
- 2 lamps

Dining Room

- 1 dining table
- 6-10 chairs
- 1 china cabinet
- 1 credenza or chest
- 1 9'x12' carpet

Appliances

- 1 washer
- 1 dryer
- 1 vacuum
- 1 stove
- 1 refrigerator
- 1 freezer

Master Bedroom

- 1 queen-size or 2 twin beds
- 2 nightstands
- 1 dresser
- 1 chest
- 2 lamps
- 1 mirror
- 1 bedroom chair

Terrace Furniture

- 1 patio table
- 4 side chairs
- 2 side tables
- 1 chaise lounge

Bathrooms

- 1 medicine cabinet per bathroom
- towel rack

Miscellaneous

- 1 desk
- pillows
- ladder
- lawnmower
- fire extinguisher
- outdoor trash can

Appliances

- air-conditioner for each living room, dining room, occupied bedroom

Miscellaneous

- garden hose
- transformers (2-3 per residence)
- 1 card table
- 4 card table chairs
- water filter
- ironing board
- kitchen cabinets
- generator
- smoke detectors

Bring your own small appliances, preferably 220v, or with transformers to convert 110v. Appliances available here are expensive and scarce. A few light-weight blankets are welcome during the cool season. The Embassy does not provide medium or large rugs, double beds, wastebaskets, or hangers.

Utilities and Equipment

Electric current in all residences in Bamako is 220v, 50 cycle. Convert record players and tape recorders to 50 cycles. Other 60-cycle, motor-driven appliances work well with appropriate transformers but operate only at five-sixths normal speed.

Municipal electric power is undependable. Voltage fluctuations and power outages (18-24 hours) are common in some areas. Emergency generators have been installed in all homes to meet minimum electrical requirements.

European-style (round-prong) sockets make converter plugs necessary. Bring them for all items. Information on American firms selling 220v appliances is available in the Department's Foreign Service Lounge.

Consider bringing these items:

- Meat grinder
- Blender
- Lightbulbs, particularly yellow-antibug, 220v, bayonet-type
- 220v iron, toaster, hair dryer
- Ice cream maker
- Nonelectric clocks
- Heating pad
- Vaporizer
- Voltage regulator
- Outdoor grill and garden furniture
- Pool toys (rafts, tubes, balls)
- Frogs for flowers
- Home movies and slides and projector
- Music, books, games, cards, scorecards
- Anything needed for birthdays, holidays, Thanksgiving, and Christmas
- Sports equipment (basketball, tennis rackets and balls, badminton, etc.)
- Camping equipment (hiking shoes, tent, sleeping bags, water canteens, Thermosjars, and camping lights (also useful when electricity fails))
- Fishing equipment
- If you ride, bring tack

Sun hats for hiking, walking, riding
US stamps
Sunglasses and sun screen and tanning
lotions
Sturdy sandals and tennis
shoes for adults and children
Pressure cooker
Auto parts and supplies
Mosquito repellent

Food

During the dry season, fresh vegetables such as potatoes, cauliflower, onions, tomatoes, green beans, green peppers, radishes, corn (tough), eggplants, lettuce, peas, carrots, and spinach are available in adequate quantities. During the rainy season, however, the supply of these vegetables is limited. Delicacies such as asparagus, artichokes, apples, peaches, and nuts (other than peanuts) are sometimes available at high prices in local stores.

Citrus fruits, avocados, papayas, mangoes, bananas, strawberries, pineapples, and melons are available in season.

Malian butchers sell pork, beef, mutton, and sometimes chicken. Quality varies; you should be familiar with several marinating and tenderizing recipes to add flavor. All meat is freshly killed and it takes some skill to prepare. The butcher shops prepare roasts and chops to order. At the market you may buy meat on the hoof or large, more inexpensive portions which you must cut up. Buying such portions is cheaper, but it requires some knowledge of meats. Live frogs, for their legs, are sold door to door and at the market in season. You can also buy them prepared in local restaurants.

Two small supermarkets, Mali-mag and Somiex, offer a variety of packaged and prepared foods. Supply is unreliable so what is available one week is not necessarily available the next. Baby foods, wines, dry goods, canned prepared meals made in France, jam from China, honey from Spain, and yogurt from France are usually available. Cheeses come from France, as do some prepared cold cuts and very expensive ice cream and candy. Rice, salt, flour, and dried milk are sometimes available in the stores. Small branches of the two supermarkets can be found in major provincial cities.

Bring as much food as authorized in the consumables allowance. A commissary (deposit \$250/single, \$500/family) will open soon and sell a

modest variety of dried goods, canned goods, and sundries. However, a large consumables shipment is still essential. Ship flour (all kinds), sugar, fruit juices, Kool-Aid, powdered milk, peanut butter, all paper products, cleaning agents, special foods (Chinese, Mexican, etc.), spices and condiments, cereals, syrup, popcorn, Pringles and pretzels, canned meats and spreads, and pet foods.

At regular "food swaps" Embassy personnel buy, sell, or trade with each other. This helps newcomers awaiting orders. If you have a good cookshopper, you can buy enough in town, though it is not easy and expensive. Malians do not eat the same foods as non-Malians; therefore, many foods considered ordinary in the US are unusual and expensive here.

A typical menu in a Malian household is "toden" (millet patties), about the size of hamburger buns, dipped in a brown sauce. The sauce is a glutinous mixture made from okra or dried leaves from the Baobab tree (sira bleu). Occasionally tomatoes and onions are added to the sauce, and along with other herbs, salts, and red hot peppers, give it a distinctive taste. Another treat is peanut butter gravy over rice. For a celebration, beef, mutton, or chicken is cooked in the sauce. Rice or millet is always eaten out of a common bowl, with the right hand. Men and women traditionally do not eat together.

Clothing

Washable clothes are the most convenient since reliable drycleaning is not available. Clothing wears out quickly because of frequent washing and rough handling. On the sand, gravel, mud, and unpaved streets, shoes wear out quickly too. Clogs are good for the markets and around town.

Tailored Western-style clothes are expensive. Readymade items are rare and also expensive. If you sew, a machine is an absolute necessity. Bring patterns, threads, needles, and all you need to sew your clothing. Cloth is readily available.

Bring a variety of bathing suits; chlorinated water wears them out quickly.

For the rainy season, with muddy roads, large puddles, and sudden downpours, an umbrella or raincoat is useful but not essential.

Men. Summer clothing is suitable for Bamako. For the 2-3 months of "cool" season and for R&R travel, bring some warm clothing. American-style shirts, shorts, socks, and suits cannot be bought here. French-style men's shirts are sometimes available at high prices. You can replenish your clothing while on R&R.

Men can order "safari" suits appropriate for office and social wear at a reasonable price locally; however, workmanship varies considerably. A suitable wardrobe would include: wash-and-wear suits (with careful instructions and overseeing the first washings); wool suit and overcoat for travel in Europe or North Africa; washable trousers and short-sleeved shirts (normally worn without tie to work); a light-weight jacket; dark dress trousers (not essential); sports attire; bathing trunks; light-weight hats (for sun protection); dress and work shoes, desert boots, hunting or hiking shoes, and more than one pair of tennis shoes. Also: extra socks, underwear, pajamas, ties, sweaters, and sports coats for cool nights.

Women. During the day, short summer dresses and skirts or pants are worn. In the evening women wear casual long dresses.

Long, loose dresses, locally called boo-boos, similar to the djelleba or kaftan, can be worn night or day. They are light, cool, and comfortable and are suitable for parties and shopping. Bring light-weight clothing; delicate materials will not last long. Underwear is often difficult to find but occasionally is imported from France. It is very expensive in a specialty shop and low quality in supermarkets. Light-weight slacks, jeans, cotton dresses, skirts, and shirts are good to bring. Some find that cotton knits are comfortable and convenient.

Roads are rutted and rocky and sidewalks are almost unknown. Malian girls and women walk slowly on high stacked shoes. Do not bring such styles. Shorts should never be worn in town but are acceptable at home and for sports.

Light-weight casual hats for hiking and shopping to keep off the bright sun are useful. Local hats are interesting and make fine decorations, but they are awkward for daily wear.

Hair and skin suffer from dry heat part of the year and from humidity the rest of the year. Bring extra supplies of what you would normally use such as



Market Square, Bamako.

sun screen cream. A simple hair style is best since swimming and the heat make frequent shampooing necessary.

Several dressy affairs, such as the Lions Club Ball, the Rotary Club Ball, and the US Marine Corps Ball are held. You will wear your finest at these occasions. Both the Lions Club and Rotary Club Balls are international charity balls. They are not exclusive, but they are expensive. Parisian foods, flowers from Dakar, and special raffles of items donated by noteworthy people, lend an international, memorable flair to these events. The Marine Corps Ball is also international but by invitation. American community members cooperate in preparing for the evening.

Bring suitable winter clothing for travel in North Africa or Europe, not only for R&R but for an unforeseen medical evacuation to Europe.

Children. Bring a generous supply of normal summer wear. Heat and dust necessitate several clothing changes a day. Small children wear little clothing but need protection from flies or mosquitoes. Knit shirts, shorts, and pants are useful. Sweaters are necessary in the cool season to wear to school and for evening movies. Bring plenty of shoes, sneakers, and sandals.

Bring a good supply of underclothes, jeans, and swimsuits. Schoolgirls often wear dresses, but jeans and other pants are also acceptable. Boys often wear short shorts to school, in

the French style, but just as many wear long pants or jeans.

Schoolbags, Thermoses, pens, pencils, and tablets might be brought, but you can buy them here. Most children simply carry plastic water bottles and buy supplies as they need them.

Supplies and Services

Supplies

Water softeners, liquid cement, glue and other repair adhesives, masking tape, and household and garden tools are sometimes available locally, but for convenience, bring your own. Malian and French unfiltered cigarettes and some American cigarettes can be found. Brand name French cosmetics and toiletries are usually available in local shops, but American products are not.

Bring the following with you: cosmetics, toiletries, deodorants, feminine personal supplies, birth control items, dry skin creams and lotions, candles and candleholders, razors and blades, and hair conditioners and spray.

Also bring Unguentine, Mercurchrome, antibiotic ointment, thermometers, Band-Aids, and some general first aid and medical supplies. Some things can be obtained, as needed, from the Embassy nurse. Bring at least a 6-month supply of any prescription medicine.

"Off" or similar repellents are effective in keeping insects from biting

but are not for sale here. Insect sprays are sold locally but are more expensive than in the US. Bring creams and liquids to relieve bites and sunburn: sometimes it is preferable to dry the area; other times to soften it. Aluminum-wrapped towelettes are a real luxury on trips, and insecticide-treated towelettes are easier to carry than bottles and cans.

Bring mops, brooms, flashlights and batteries, paper napkins, plates, and cups for picnics and at home, toothpicks (never available locally), shelfpaper, party decorations, favors, hats, balloons, birthday and Christmas gifts, gift wrapping, Christmas decorations, and cards. An artificial tree is convenient, but real trees are occasionally imported from France. The availability of real Christmas trees is not guaranteed each year, and they may arrive somewhat dried out. Other things to bring are: greeting cards; colored candles for tables and birthday candles for cakes; safety pins; a French-English dictionary; clothing accessories; extra passport-size photos and smaller ones for camera permits, driving permits, identity cards, visas to other African countries; etc.

Basic Services

Tailors and dressmakers make only simple clothes. Drycleaning is unreliable. Servants usually do laundry at home. Do not bring clothing requiring special care. Simple shoe repairs can be done, but the work is not always satisfactory.

Beauty shops are French or Lebanese, and one French barbershop is open.

Although Bamako has radio repair shops, parts for US sets are rare. Small stocks of some French tubes, condensers, and the like are available. Watch repairs can be done in the one repair shop.

Mechanics are familiar with French cars and a few can work on German and Japanese cars. No spare parts are stocked for US cars, so usually the mechanic has to make the part, or you must order it from the US.

Domestic Help

Almost all servants are men, but women can be hired to watch children. The average family of four needs a "boy-cuisinier" (cook-houseman) at about \$100 a month and a gardener, who gardens and looks after the swimming pool, for about \$50 a month.

A busy Bamako street.



You are expected to give the houseservants clothing money to buy uniforms. If you entertain a great deal, you need a servant to do the laundry and housework and a separate cook. A full-time launderer is usually employed only by large families. Most servants have "attestations," letters of recommendation, which you should read.

It is the employer's responsibility to pay social security above the salary (\$5-\$6, monthly) after a reasonable trial period (3 months). This assures the employee of retirement benefits.

Uniforms cost about \$20 each and are usually khaki for regular work and white for special entertaining.

If possible, try to employ a servant or cook who has already worked for Americans and is trained in cleaning vegetables and boiling water. See Health and Medicine.

All servants are entitled to 30 days (2½ days a month) of paid vacation a year. Some prefer to take the month's salary as a bonus and continue working. A servant who has worked more than 14 days is entitled to 8 days' notice or 8 days' pay if terminated, as well as payment of all vacation earned.

When a servant leaves, if employed by the same employer at least 2 years, the servant is entitled to an extra amount of 20% of the final month's salary, for each year employed.

Do not expect to hire English-speaking servants. They are rare. Most servants speak French quite well but few can read or write.

Religious Activities

In Bamako, French and Bambara Masses are regularly sung at a centrally located, large Roman Catholic Church. The American Protestant mission holds French and Bambara services at a modest church. At the Protestant mission compound English services are held on Sunday evenings. Nondenominational services are held on Saturday evenings. A small Sunday school is popular with the English-speaking community. Muslim prayers are observed in the mosques on Fridays.

Education

Dependent Education

The American International School of Bamako (AISB) was established in January 1977 and offers kindergarten through grade 8. The school uses a standard US curriculum and testing program. In addition to regular courses, all students have classes in French. AISB keeps close ties to the US educational system through a school-to-school program with the Shenedowah Schools in New York. The current enrollment of 30 students represents 6 countries. The staff consists of three full-time US certified teachers, one aide, and one French teacher.

The local school system includes a French school for French citizens and other French-speaking foreign children in Mali. Liberte A is the elementary

level and has a class especially for non-French-speaking children. They must reach a certain level before attending regular classes given in French. They usually study 1 year in this class before attending suitable classes in the regular school.

Students attend Liberte A from 7:45 am to 12:15 pm, 6 days a week. Cost is minimal. Children are generally about ages 6-12, but occasionally an older child who needs to learn French enrolls. Many nationalities are represented, including Malian, German, American, English-speaking Africans, and others.

Liberte B is for Malian children only. Askia Mohammed is the high school for French-speaking foreigners and completely bilingual Malians. It has no special classes and is serious work toward a French baccalaureate degree.

Correspondence courses are an alternative to enrollment in local schools. For private instruction in French, readily available tutors charge about \$5 an hour.

Away From Post. If you wish to educate your children away from post you can choose from a multitude of private boarding schools in Europe, the US, and Africa. Much depends on the age and emotional maturity of the dependent and educational background and objectives. In the recent past, Embassy and AID personnel have enrolled children in boarding schools in Switzerland, Tangiers, New York, and Minnesota among others.

To help in the selection process, schools are listed in a publication of the European Council of International Schools, in *Schools Abroad*, by Porter Sargent, and in *Private Schools in the United States*, by Lyon and Bunting. You can consult these and other information available in the Department of State's Office of Overseas Schools (A/OS).

Special Educational Opportunities

The Embassy hires teachers to give French classes to American employees and their spouses. These classes are not open to children. Knowledge of French is needed at post. Employees should be satisfactorily proficient on arrival.

An AID spouse currently instructs children in ballet. A French teacher in Bamako also teaches Karate. If you are

interested, bring the necessary clothing and equipment.

Music instructors in piano and the guitar are available. Some employees have learned to play a local instrument, the Kora.

Post Orientation Program

The post supplies a Welcome Kit with general information, and a formal orientation program for newcomers has been established under the auspices of the Ambassador and in conjunction with the Community Liaison officer.

Recreation and Social Life

The American Community Center. February 1, 1981, marked the official opening of the American Community Center located on a plateau overlooking the Niger River. This facility offers swimming, tennis (one concrete court to date), volleyball, darts, horseshoes, Ping-pong, and badminton. It has a growing supply of athletic equipment, games for all ages, and a small library.

The converted residence opened with an indoor/outdoor bar, a snack-bar, outdoor movie facility, and a large-screen video system. Future plans include a terrace restaurant, a larger swimming pool, and a grass softball field. Weekly meetings of the bridge club and poker group as well as biweekly informational seminars are held. A weekly "Bingo Night" will begin soon.

Membership is open to all duty-free residents in Mali. The annual fee for the first year of operation is \$120/adult and \$30/child (5-18 years). Presently 30% of the membership is non-American. It provides a pleasant social and recreational environment for Americans and non-Americans to meet.

The pace of life in Bamako is slow. The style of living is modest and informal. Little of the social life of the coastal cities of Dakar and Abidjan exists here. Malians entertain foreigners in their homes rarely and then modestly. Life does not revolve around clubs and outings but around home and family. Malian men crowd the stadium to watch the soccer matches, and horseraces are held on Sundays during the cool season.

The leisurely, home-oriented life may make readjustments of priorities and attitude on the part of newcomers

necessary. The slow pace, poverty, and climate may bring cultural shock, but the charm of Mali and Malians can overcome this initial impression. Xenophobia does not occur here.

The heat, isolation, and relatively small circle of contacts make it desirable to plan trips fairly regularly, either out of town or out of the country.

Sports

Most Americans live an outdoor life of tennis, swimming, softball, and riding, mixed with informal home entertaining. You'll have time to read, travel, see occasional movies, and enjoy family activities.

Almost all houses have pools. An Olympic-size swimming pool at the Omni-Sport complex is open to the public most of the year. It costs about 75¢ a day. Because of the very real danger of schistosomiasis, never water ski or swim in the Niger River or in any natural body of water. The Hotel de l'Amitie has a swimming pool membership during the hot season. You can verify the varying fees at the hotel's reception desk.

Small boatowners may join the Bamako Canoe Club, which provides docking and storage facilities. During the July-November season, the Niger River is high enough for a boat to travel up river from Bamako to the Guinea border. Most boatowners spend Sundays on the river, picnicking at several beaches 30-40 kilometers from Bamako. When the river level is low (December to June), the river is not navigable for larger craft (10 hp and above), but small fishing boats with 2.5 to 10 hp motors can still be used in some places. Due to water level variations and large rocks scattered along the river bottom, carry along a spare propeller and extra shaft pins.

The Club Soudan has tennis facilities. Two current club members must sponsor your membership. A family membership costs 60,000 MF for the first adult, 30,000 MF for the second adult, and 20,000 MF for each child, in addition to an initial membership fee of 10,000 MF.

Hunting is prohibited in Mali.

The biggest spectator sport is European football (soccer). Mali has several good teams, and their games in the Bamako Stadium are enthusiastically attended.

The French riding club offers English-style riding and jumping lessons. You must pay a yearly membership fee as well as monthly fees and tip the instructor. Tack is provided. The racetrack also rents horses but they are of poor quality and the tack is inferior. The military school offers satisfactory, though erratic, instruction (about \$60 per quarter), and riding gear is in good shape. If you bring your own tack, remember that local horses are small; girths should be about size 30.

Fishing is good on the Niger River in the dry season and large capitaine (a species of perch) and chien fish are common catches.

American and Canadian men and women have a three-team league of mixed nationality; i.e., no team is all-American or all-Canadian. The equipment is owned by the Canadian Embassy and the US Marine Security Guards. Bring your own glove.

Bring light-weight cots, sleeping bags, light-weight canteens, cooking equipment, camping foods, and a tent. Many areas in Mali can be seen only by safari.

A camera permit is absolutely necessary before clicking a shutter. It may take a few weeks to acquire, but you would risk losing your camera to police without a permit. Film and equipment are not usually available. Black-and-white films can be quickly developed in any one of several photography shops but color cannot. Photo opportunities are great and varied. Most people use the pouch to send film to be developed. See Customs and Duties.

Touring and Outdoor Activities

The small, inexpensive Bamako Zoo is an easy ride from town on the road to Koulouba. It is interesting and has a variety of animals and birds.

The Parc National du Baoule and the Conintella Camp, open to visitors during the dry season, are both run by the Forestry Department. They are interesting places to spend a weekend seeing wild animals in their natural habitats.

The best time to see the country is in the dry, cool season from November to February. A pleasant 3-hour drive takes you to Segou, one of the best examples of Soudanese African towns.

The Niger River trips on the "Tombouctou" or "General Soumare" from Koulikoro (1 hour from Bamako) to Mopti, Tombouctou, and Gao (re-

turn by boat or plane) are very popular and must be reserved early. River trips usually begin in September, depending on how deep the river is, and may continue into February. It is 5 days one way and 6 days (against the current) on return. Many people prefer boarding the boat in Mopti after visiting the Dogon country. Boats are relatively comfortable, but passengers usually take along juice, iodine tablets for water, and fruit or snacks.

First-class cabins are usually for four people, but some cabins are available for two people. Travelers should distinguish between two kinds of first-class accommodations: Class "A" includes the cabin with toilet (communal shower); cost is about \$175 a person, one way. Class "B" is a cabin, with communal toilet/shower facilities, and it costs about \$164 a person, one way. Deluxe class is a two-bed cabin, air-conditioned with private bath and costs about \$745 for two people one way to Gao, and about \$500 each, one way. The life of the fishing people and herders along the riverbanks is fascinating, and occasionally you may see a herd of giraffes gliding through an open area or hippopotamuses swimming in the river.

Dogon country in Bandiagara is famous for its rocky cliffs. Villagers live in odd-shaped, narrow mudhouses with round roofs nestled in little groups which blend into the landscape, making them almost invisible. The animist Dogon tribe is renowned for its dances and celebrations and will perform for tourists for a fee. Guided tours of the area take from 3 hours for the "middle walk" to 8 hard but fascinating hours for the "long walk." Guides must be arranged for through the SMERT (National Tourist Bureau) office in Sangha. Guides are steady, agile, and very helpful. Take along water, oranges or tangerines, and some money to buy unusual handmade articles along the way.

Mopti, a fishing port, has a colorful market, a comfortable "motel" nearby at Sevaré, and an interesting mosque.

Djenne, 2 hours southwest of Mopti, is famous for its mosque built in unique Soudanic style. The market is also worth a trip.

Tombouctou is interesting only in that it is indeed the Tombouctou (Timbuktu) of legendary salt caravans, traffic in slaves and gold, and trade in spices and cloth. Although Tombou-

ctou has inspired many famous tales of the French Foreign Legion, riches, and adventure, it is now just a sleepy, sandy town on the edge of the Sahara. If you have the time and spirit, you can rent a camel and join the Tuaregs in "tea on the dunes," which consists of three tiny cups of strong-mint tea and the ghosts of explorers long gone.

Gao, ancient capital of the Songhai Empire, is the jumping-off point for trans-Saharan expeditions. Gao's mosque of Askia Mohammed is worth seeing.

Several other interesting Malian towns are reached by paved road, but beyond the paved network, roads are laterite and dirt and vary from fair to nearly impassable. Four-wheel-drive vehicles are necessary off the main roads.

Most trips call for sleeping in rudimentary guesthouses or camping, not generally recommended for the less than hardy. Many people have driven from Abidjan to Bamako to pick up their cars, a 2-day drive. All except 120 miles of the 890-mile road is paved. You can drive to Ouagadougou and Bobo-Dioulasso in Upper Volta, Niamey, capital of Niger, and on from these cities to other African countries. The rocky track to Dakar is not recommended.

US personnel are encouraged to visit as much of nearby Africa as possible to derive the most out of their tour in Mali. Although air travel is expensive, you can fly from Bamako directly to Dakar, Conakry, Monrovia, Abidjan, Accra, Bouaké, Bobo-Dioulasso, Ouagadougou, and Niamey in Africa, and to Paris.

Entertainment

The National Dance Group occasionally gives a show that you should not miss. The Group is excellent, and expresses a very exciting art form in its mime, dance, and rhythms.

American movies are regularly shown at the Community Center and the Marine house. The films are acquired through the West African Film Service circuit and run from good to terrible. Several movie houses in Bamako show French films and Indian, Italian, and other French-dubbed films.

American jazz and contemporary music is very popular with Malians and the foreign community. It is played in

the local discos. You will have plenty of time to listen to music and enjoy books. Bring along a good collection of both. The Embassy has a small library. The Community Liaison Office and the Community Center organize regularly social and personal enrichment programs such as seminars. The entire community can participate.

Social Activities

Rotary and Lions Clubs are in Bamako, with weekly meetings. An informal group of women from various diplomatic missions assists a local orphanage.

A bilingual (English/French) daytime bridge group exists, and the Hotel de l'Amitié has weekly evening and weekend bridge tournaments. The Community Liaison Office has organized regular seminars on topics of interest to the American community. Recent topics include "Shopping for African Art and Artifacts," "What To Do in Case of Evacuation," and "Operation of Household Generators."

Local clubs sponsor lectures in which French-speaking documentary film directors present and explain their films. In addition, various embassies bring in occasional cultural presentations. The Bamako Amateur Theatrical Society, a multinational English-speaking group, has been organized and presents two or three theatrical productions a year.

Local nightclubs and hotels offer live or disco dance music. Soccer and horseracing fans will find plenty of action each weekend, even if not of World Cup or Kentucky Derby standards.

Generally, however, entertainment is informal and in private homes.

Official Functions

Nature of Functions

The diplomatic colony is small and social events are few. However, the Ambassador, DCM, AID director, and public affairs officer will have heavy representational functions.

Standards of Social Conduct

The only formal calls made here are those that Chief of Mission, counselors, and their spouses normally make on Malian officials and diplomatic colleagues. Bring calling cards if you have them because Malians like to exchange cards. Invitations can be printed locally. Bring your own informals.

Notes For Travelers

Getting to the Post

Airfreight should be shipped direct to Bamako via Paris. Be sure to send it ahead since it often takes longer than expected. Include any special medicines and some mosquito repellant in your accompanied baggage. Note whether it is the dry or the wet season and come prepared. Bring sunglasses and put your shortwave radio in the airfreight or bring it with you. You will need US postage stamps.

Travelers coming to Bamako should check airline schedules carefully to insure that their travel complies with the Fly America Act.

Most incoming household effects shipments are shipped by sea to Antwerp, trucked to Paris, and airfreighted to Bamako. These shipments are coordinated by the European Logistics Support Office (ELSO) in Antwerp. Most outgoing shipments are handled similarly.

Customs, Duties, and Passage

Customs and Duties

The Malian Government allows free entry of personal effects, consumables, and one automobile per employee for all diplomatic personnel during their assignments, and for all nondiplomatic personnel for the first 6 months of their tours.

The Embassy will assist in automobile registration. Bring a valid US or international drivers license. Third-party liability insurance is obligatory but easily obtained from the Cie. d'Assurances Generales in Bamako. Many Embassy personnel buy collision, fire, and theft insurance in the US when they purchase marine insurance as the cost is nearly prohibitive in Mali; i.e., about \$1,000 a year.

Passage

Obtain an entry visa for Mali in advance. If you come directly from a country with no Malian embassy and there is no time to obtain a visa en route, the Embassy's Consular Section

can usually obtain an "airport visa" for those with diplomatic or official passports with 48 hours' advance notice. Airport visa requests should include full name, date and place of birth, passport number, date and place of issue, and ETA/flight number. Malian missions are located in Accra, Abidjan, Algiers, Bonn, Brussels, Cairo, Dakar, East Berlin, Jidda, Moscow, New York, Beijing, and Washington, DC.

All official Americans are issued Malian identity cards. Carry at least five extra passport-size photos for various identity cards.

Pets

Dogs and cats must have rabies shots yearly. Wild animals are sometimes adopted, but they should be checked beforehand by a veterinarian for possible disease and given necessary shots. Many exotic diseases are picked up by domestic pets that roam outside the

compounds with goats, sheep, cattle, and donkeys.

Pets are not quarantined if current certificates of good health and rabies inoculation are presented on arrival.

Firearms and Ammunition

US Government personnel assigned to Bamako must obtain prior approval from the Chief of Mission to import firearms. Permission is based on individual demonstrated need (including target-shooting). You may bring only the following quantities and types of nonautomatic firearms and ammunition:

Item	Quantity
Handgun	1
Rifle	1
Shotgun	1
Ammunition	100 for each rifle and/or shotgun
	50 for a pistol or revolver

For details, write the administrative officer.



Yogou Dogorou, in the Bandiagara region, is the cradle of the Dogon race.

Currency, Banking, and Weights and Measures

The Malian franc is the basic currency. It is based in value on the French franc at a rate of 100 FM to 1 FF. There are coins for 5, 10, 25, 50, and 100 FM and notes for 100, 500, 1,000, 5,000, and 10,000 FM.

The exchange rate is based on the floating French franc. The dollar rate, therefore, changes daily, so you must check the rate for French francs. CFA (currency of most Francophone African countries) is usually acceptable and is worth double the same amount in Malian francs; 500CFA are worth 1,000 Malian francs, or 50CFA equal 1 French franc.

The metric system is standard.

Taxes, Exchange, and Sale of Property

Restrictions

Official and diplomatic personnel do not pay Malian taxes or excise levies.

You may sell items to other diplomatic personnel on departure. Malians, however, must pay government taxes if they buy duty-free imported goods.

Facilities

The Embassy's Cashier's Office is open Monday, Wednesday, and Friday mornings for accommodation exchange. It is also open on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons for 1 hour to handle emergency needs. Bring your personal checkbooks to post, as it normally takes at least 1 month for personnel to be paid out of RFC Paris after arrival. You may wish to bring a substantial amount of travelers checks for emergencies. The Embassy will cash checks up to the amount of \$250 in Malian francs. Dollars are paid out only for official travel outside Mali and limited to \$50 each.

Normal retail banking services, including checking accounts, are avail-

able. Travelers checks are accepted by banks but not on the street, in local shops, or at airlines. The only organization that will accept credit cards is UTA, the international airline, and then only for as much as a ticket to a nearby city such as Dakar or Abidjan. UTA will accept such credit cards as Carte Blanche, Diner's Club, American Express, Eurocard, and Carte Bleue.

Recommended Reading

These titles are provided as a general indication of the material published on this country. The Department of State does not endorse unofficial publications.

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Local Holidays

American and local employees of all US Government agencies observe American holidays. American employees required to work during normal working hours on local holidays do not receive additional compensation for such work.

New Year's Day	Jan. 1
Army Day	Jan. 20
Labor Day	May 1
Day of Africa	May 25
Independence Day	Sept. 22
Liberation Day	Nov. 19
Christmas	Dec. 25
Mawloud (2 days)*	
End of Ramadan*	
Tabaski*	
Easter Monday*	

*These holidays vary, depending on the lunar calendar.